

Remarks

Claims 1, 3-5, 7-12, 13-19, 21, 23-27, 30-36, and 38-40 are pending. The Applicants have previously canceled claims 2, 6, 12, 20, 28 and 29 without prejudice. In this Amendment, the Applicants have canceled claim 37 without prejudice.

Allowable Subject Matter

In the Office action mailed November 24, 2006 ("Action"), the Office rejects claims 1, 3-5, 7-11, 13-19, 21, 23-27 and 30-34. The Applicants respectfully disagree with the rejections, but are amending the claims to expedite prosecution.

In the Action, the Office indicates that claims 35-39 are allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of their base claim 1. Claim 1 has been rewritten to include all of the limitations of claim 37. Claim 1 should therefore be considered allowable. Claims 3-5, 7-8, 30-36, and 38-40 all depend from allowable claim 1 and therefore should be allowed.

Claim 9 has been rewritten to include language (from allowed claim 35) that was highlighted in the section entitled, "Allowable Subject Matter." (Action, pages 17-18.) Claim 9 should therefore be considered allowable. Claims 10-11 depend from allowable claim 9, and so should themselves be allowable.

Claim 13 has been rewritten to include language (from allowable claims 35 and 38) that was highlighted in the section entitled, "Allowable Subject Matter." (Action, pages 17-18.) Claim 13 should therefore be considered allowable. Claims 14-17 depend from allowable claim 13, and so should themselves be allowable.

Claim 18 has been rewritten to include language (from allowed claim 35) that was highlighted in the section entitled, "Allowable Subject Matter." (Action, pages 17-18.) Claim 18 should therefore be considered allowable. Claims 19, 21, and 23 depend from allowable claim 18 and should therefore be considered allowable.

Claim 24 has been rewritten to include language (from allowable claim 37) that was highlighted in the section entitled, "Allowable Subject Matter." (Action, pages 17-18.) Claim 24 should therefore be considered allowable. Claims 25-27 depend from allowable claim 24 and should therefore be considered allowable.

All pending claims therefore should be considered allowable.

Request for Interview

If any issues remain, the Examiner is formally requested to contact the undersigned attorney prior to issuance of the next correspondence in order to arrange a telephonic interview. It is believed that a brief discussion of the merits of the present application may expedite prosecution. Applicants submit the foregoing formal Amendment so that the Examiner may fully evaluate Applicants' position, thereby enabling the interview to be more focused.

This request is being submitted under MPEP § 713.01, which indicates that an interview may be arranged in advance by a written request.

Conclusion

The claims in their present form should now be allowable. Such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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